

Memphis Association for the Education of Young Children

Index Card Questions & Answers

March 6, 2012 Meeting

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1. When a child attends less than 8 hours, how do you do the reimbursement?

Providers are not paid by the hour. Providers are reimbursed based on whether the parent has a child in full-time care (20 hours or more per week) or part-time care (1-19 hours per week). Reimbursement is based on the number of hours the parent needs care according to their work activity (part-time or full-time).

2. Some processors process the certificates (EAV's) children by the day – Some process by the week. Clarify which they should be doing.

EAVs are processed as they are received. This is a daily responsibility of Fiscal Services.

3. When are we going to get a raise? We have not gotten one in 10 years.

This is a legislative issue and depends on the State and Department budget.

4. It takes the Client Rep. too long to process certificates.

Families First cases must be processed within 45 days from the date of application.

5. If you terminate a child on the 1st or 31st, we are not getting the notices in time to know that the child is terminated. What do we do then?

Notify the Client Rep. If there is no documentation the termination was sent an adjustment can be done. However, children should not be kept after the end date on the certificate.

6. How can the parent continue their eligibility when, during these times, jobs are scarce and/or they do not give the parent enough hours?

Families First clients must participate in a work/training activity for 30 hours unless they meet an exemption. This is federal policy. Parents who work, but are not working 30 hours, must make up the hours with an additional activity. They are assisted with this by the Families First Work Activity Contractor who places them in an activity so all client do have assistance in meeting the work requirement.

7. Would it be possible to let the center know when you terminate children by email or mail – because sometime they come out after the date of termination?

With the volume of clients we serve; emailing every termination would be an overwhelming task. We do send notification by mail.

8. If DHS terminates a child due to the parent, or whatever reason, in the middle of the month and the child is there all month, how do we, the center, know that child is terminated when we, the center, get the notices 2 weeks later?

Notify the Client Rep. If there is no documentation the termination was sent, an adjustment can be done.

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9. Why does the parent's certificate end in 18 months and the children are still under kindergarten age?

Transitional Child Care is in place to help the parent "transition" from the Families First cash assistance program to self-sufficiency. It is an 18-month time period for the caretaker to determine and plan how he/she will manage. It is not based on a child's age.

10. Why do parents get terminated if their work week drops below 30 hours due to slow work in the warehouses or restaurants they work?

See the response to number 6.

11. Why do Client Reps. take so long to process certificates for eligible parents?

Cases should be processed within 45 days from the date of the Families First application.

12. Do child care providers contract child care with the parents or with the State?

As providers, you have a contract with the State which allows you to be paid for the services provided.

13. Why do certificates end in the middle of the month?

Various reasons: non-compliance with a work activity or child support, failure to provide requested documentation, etc.

14. If the certificate ends on the 30th of the month, do you get paid for the 30th?

Yes

15. How many days per week can the child be absent before the center won't be paid? For example, if a child is absent 3 days in a row for a week will the center still receive a payment?

See your Provider Contract – Section A.4.h.

16. Why are certificates given to providers who have more than their licensed capacity on one shift?

This has been an ongoing issue for some time, partly because there is a difference in the definition of "over-capacity (a licensing term) and over-enrollment (a child care certificate term). "Licensed capacity" is the number of individuals allowed in a given space at one time as established by the DHS licensing office. "Over-enrollment does not necessarily mean a provider is over its licensed capacity, though it could.

The electronic child care system gives a warning to the child care worker that an approved certificate may result in an over-enrollment. At that point the worker must contact the provider to determine if he/she does have space and an approved certificate child will not cause an over-enrollment situation before a certificate can be approved.

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Currently, the State Licensing Program, the Certificate Program, Internal Audit, and Fiscal Services are working together to create a plan to address this problem and help prevent over-enrollments.

17. What are the things that the internal audit look for during their visits and what are the problems?

Internal Audit looks to be sure that the child care facility has documentation (sign-in sign-out sheets that support the EAVS that were submitted for the same dates). Are the correct children on the EAVs for the correct dates? Did the parent/caretaker sign the child in and out? Is the documentation available on site when the auditor arrives? Are absences, holidays, closed days, etc. coded correctly on the EAVs? In addition, they look at agency cash receipt records to verify that the agencies are collecting the required co-pay fees, at agency cash receipts to verify the state rates are not more than the amounts charged for private pay children, and at personnel files to ensure that all employees who have contact with children have had the required background checks.

Another issue that Internal Audit has encountered is moving a child between multiple sites owned by one provider. For example, the provider owns ABC #1 and ABC #2. If a child is certified to attend ABC #1, he/she cannot attend ABC #2 without a certificate for that site. If an ABC #1 child is found to be attending ABC #2 without a certificate, the provider be charged with an overpayment for any monies the State paid for the child's care at ABC#2.

18. Will the teen parents receive child care all year or not?

Teen parents in high school can receive child care during the school year and during the summer as long as they intend to return to school in the fall. Eligibility will end at graduation or age 20.

19. How do we get paid for additional hours when a child stays 10 to 11 hours a day because the parent is a MATA bus rider?

DHS either pays a full-time or part-time rate. Providers are not paid by the hour.

20. What do we do when parents don't pay their co-payment and who do we call when certificates end early?

Parent co-pay is a part of the eligibility requirement for parents; it is not optional. In addition, providers must collect the co-pay or risk being sanctioned. See the Provider Contract, section C.5.c. It is the parent's responsibility to inquire about an ended certificate. DHS cannot discuss the particulars of an individual's case with a provider.

21. How many days can they miss before we terminate them?

See your Provider Contract – section A4

22. The Tennessee Network of Childcare Providers would like to know, with the extremely high cost of gas and other cost associated with transporting children, if and when we can expect to receive some type of assistance with transportation expenses?

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The Tennessee Network of Childcare Providers has previously discussed this issue with the Commissioner and is awaiting feedback.

23. In 2002 or 2003, DHS stopped paying transportation fees to providers, citing the need for the funds for Families First. Federal Government says the number of kids needing child care has fallen since then. Parents are being put out because of the 5 year limit. Where is the money going since fewer children are coming to centers? Shouldn't the money be going to new certificate children who need childcare?

The Tennessee Network of Childcare Providers has previously discussed this issue with the Commissioner and is awaiting feedback.

24. I have two single fathers in my childcare that can't get childcare funding. What are the qualifications for them to get childcare assistance?

The Department does not discriminate based on gender, race, religion, or economic status. If the single fathers meet the eligibility requirements for Families First and have a work requirement, they will be potentially eligible for child care the same as their single parent female counterparts.

25. Why can't we be paid for pre-k students?

The Provider Contract states at C.3.k that "The Provider understands and agrees that core hour programs funded by other agencies, i.e., Head Start or local Pre K classes, shall be excluded from attendance reports submitted to the Department. Failure to exclude these core programs may result in termination from this contract." In other words, the provider cannot be paid for the same hours by the Certificate Program and by another agency.

26. What is the correct way for a parent to sign in/out?

The parent/caretaker must sign in next to their child's name (the child's full name, not a nickname) and enter the time, and sign his/her own full name – not, mamma, granny, memaw, etc. Electronic sign-in sign-out systems are acceptable as long as the parent/caretaker has a pin number that can be traced directly back to the parent/caretaker to verify who signed the child in/out.

27. Is there any way we can be allowed to see EAV's before time?

No, there is not.

28. Are the payments the same for childcare in East, Middle, and West Tennessee?

The pay varies, depending on the age of the child, the type of facility (center, group home, family day home, or unregulated provider), the county, and the number of stars. The reimbursement chart is attached.

29. Does the State still receive monies when centers are closed?

No

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30. Why can a parent call or be allowed to transfer their children and the provider not know until the children have been with the provider an extra day or two, and the provider doesn't get paid?

Depending on the funding source, a notice is not required. However, we can determine where a child was on a certain date and pay the provider who actually provided care for that date.

31. What is the relevance of putting the hours the child attends on the EAV?

Accountability and the fact that payments are based on either full- or part-time care.

32. How can we budget employee/child ratio if payments are not consistent with children enrolled in program?

Payments are not consistent if attendance is not consistent and consistent attendance cannot be predetermined. If an employee reports for work and is not needed in a particular section because there are not enough children in attendance, then it is the provider's business decision on how to handle the situation.

33. Too many certificates are cut off without notice to the provider; at times we keep children an entire month with no payment. Can this be fixed?

Notify the Client Rep. If there is no documentation the termination was sent, an adjustment can be done. However, child care payments will not be made for children kept after a certificate end date.

34. Please address the random audit for sign in/out sheets and EAV daily count.

Please see the response to #17.

35. Why aren't the parents informed of co-payment before it begins?

They are, and certificates are mailed to the parent and provider.

36. If a child is enrolled in your center and does not show up on the EAV form, who completes the back date for that child?

Contact the Client Rep or the Child Care Counselor that signed the certificate. Always write the child in on the EAV.

37. Explain the sign-in/out for parents and the hours that are paid?

Please see your Provider Contract, Section C.3 and Attachment A (last page).

38. How often are we given a contract? Can we get a new contract?

The last contract was signed in 2010. There are no immediate plans for an update at this time.

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39. Certificates are expiring and providers not being notified until afterwards. Can centers be notified at least 1 week prior to unexpected expiration?

Ten-day notices should be mailed to the provider and parent/caretaker if a certificate is interrupted.

40. What do parents that work do about childcare when they cannot afford to pay, but cannot get childcare assistance without leaving their job? They only want child care, nothing else.

There are no child care programs currently available except those associated with Families First and the Teen Parent Child Care Program. The State is unable to fund additional child care for low-income families.

41. If a provider is approved for the star program and does not receive the first month of star payments when the renewed license was approved, how does the provider get backdated for the month missed? Example, license renewal started star payment for October, but it was not paid and star payment was received beginning November.

Star payment begins the first month after the Stars are received, so in the above example, the provider was paid correctly. This method of payment was built into the computer system and cannot be changed at this point.

42. As many providers represent small centers or centers in which the primary income is from the Certificate Program, is there a way to find out when the money will be deposited prior to the 10 day window?

There are many factors that can affect how quickly payment is made, and some are not within our control. That is why Fiscal Services provides a 10-day window – to be able to accommodate those unexpected factors and give the providers a time frame within which to expect payment.

43. What is the estimated time it takes to get money after a center receives stars? Money owed from the stars is granted and the first time the additional money is received may be a month later.

Please see number 41.

44. In a meeting with the Deputy Commissioner of DHS, in Nashville, on January 12, 2012, when asked by President Taylor who the present contract was negotiated with, Mr. Alan Hall stated that no one was there. How can it be called a contract if no one but DHS was present when negotiated? Even Mr. Hall stated that it was a big mistake to have done so.

Since The Tennessee Network of Childcare Providers has previously discussed this issue with the Deputy Commissioner; it will be necessary to await her response.

45. Some termination notices are received after the child/children have attended for at least one week.

If the provider had a certificate and provided care, he/she will be paid for the week the child was in attendance.

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46. How does being a school-age child and only attending when school is out affect the absence policy?

We think this question refers to how a school age child who attends the center only on school holidays is coded on the days he/she is not attending.

The “N” code is designed to be a placeholder and is the code used when the child is not attending – there is no payment for these days. The provider will be paid for the days the child attends as long as the provider has a certificate for the child.

47. What do you think the effects of moving children in and out of childcare monthly are? How can we help children when we have to start all over with training them?

Though we understand that constantly moving a child is not a best practice, one of the hallmarks of the Certificate Program is parental choice and parents/caretakers are allowed within policy to transfer their children.

48. How is the phone service handled in Memphis

There is no set time frame to return calls, but staff has been asked to block off time to return calls daily.

49. How much income does a parent have to make to disqualify?

Eligibility is based on various factors for each program, so there is not a single answer. The Provider co-pay/income limit chart for TCC is attached.

50. Provider Concern: Fiscal Service staff is rude when providers call

It is Fiscal Services’ intent to provide quality Customer Service. The staff members who answer the Provider Payment Help Line have been instructed to always introduce themselves. If you do not get a name, please ask, and report any problems to Shirley.Russell@tn.gov.